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ABSTRACT

A study examined special and mainstream vocational teacher involvement in design, delivery, and review of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for handicapped youth in Vermont. It also assessed inservice and program needs of mainstream vocational educators and Diversified Occupations (DO) lab instructors. Information was collected from 214 mainstream and special vocational education instructors, cooperative education coordinators, and vocational directors in Vermont area vocational centers through on-site interviews and mailed questionnaires. It was found that over one-half of the mainstream vocational education teachers were involved in IEP development. The involvement was essentially through communication with special education personnel; the patterns of communication between vocational and special education personnel were also found during the implementation and review/evaluation phases of the IEP process. Teachers without IEP students seemed to need more awareness-level training, while teachers with IEP students needed more skills-oriented training. DO lab instructors reported direct involvement in all phases of the IEP process. Their inservice needs focused on vocational curriculum and skill development activities and materials. (Appendixes, amounting to approximately one-half of the report, include on-site interview guides, survey instruments, and correspondence.) (YLB)

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AN ASSESSMENT
OF MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATOR INVOLVEMENT
IN THE IEP PROCESS AND RELATED INSERVICE NEEDS

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PREFACE

This document is a reporting of a study that examined special and mainstream vocational teacher involvement in individualized programming for handicapped youth in Vermont. More specifically, this report provides information on the involvement of mainstream vocational teachers and Diversified Occupations lab instructors in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process and the inservice and program needs of these personnel in relation to the IEP process.

Section I (Introduction) of this publication provides the rationale and purpose of the study. Also included are definitions of key terms used throughout the report. The overall organization of the study is explained in Section II (Methods and Procedures). The findings are provided in Section III. These findings are reported separately in terms of the two major groups involved; that is, mainstream vocational teachers and Diversified Occupations lab instructors. The findings in Section III are then used as the basis for the conclusions and recommendations offered in Section IV. Section V (Reflections) contains several observations made by the researchers during the course of the investigation. These observations are focused on the procedures and instruments used in the study. The remaining portions of the report include a listing of references cited and appendices. The appendices consist of the instruments used, the major correspondence written and other information important to the conduct of the study.

The study and this resulting report were made possible through the support and assistance of many individuals and agencies. Arthur Ericson, Director, and Robert Watson, Special Needs and Work Experience Consultant, Vermont Division of Vocational-Technical Education, provided important leadership in making the study possible. Their efforts in helping to move the project from an idea to a reality is much appreciated.

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Finally, the authors are indebted to the many Vermont vocational educators and Diversified Occupations lab instructors who participated in the study. Their willingness to contribute to the goals of the study and interest in expanding and improving vocational education opportunities for handicapped individuals made this project a very special experience.

Leonard Albright

Nallie Preskill

August, 1981

I INTRODUCTION

The need for vocational education personnel to be knowledgeable of and involved in educational programming for handicapped students has been heightened as a result of three interrelated forces: (1) the movement to place handicapped students in the least restrictive or the most appropriate vocational education setting; (2) the federal legislative mandates in vocational education (P.L. 94-482) and special education (P.L. 94-142) calling for expanded and improved vocational training opportunities for handicapped individuals; and (3) the results of several national studies indicating a lack of vocational educator experience and preparation in educating handicapped persons (e.g. Olympus, 1974; Staats, 1976; Smith and Hippel, 1980). These forces have played a major role in setting the stage for an increased emphasis on inservice education, as a means of strengthening vocational educator competence in working with handicapped students.

As a first step in designing an appropriate special needs oriented inservice program for vocational educators, many statewide needs assessment studies have been initiated (e.g. Greenwood and Morley, 1978; Hughes, 1978; National Evaluation Systems, Inc., 1978; Selig and Schriber, 1978; Yung, et. al., 1978). And, under the comprehensive personnel development provisions of P.L. 94-142, each state division is to conduct an annual assessment of general and special educator needs in working with handicapped students, which may include a sampling of vocational education personnel (Federal Register, August 23, 1977). Though the approaches to developing and conducting statewide needs assessments will vary, our review of several studies conducted in the vocational special needs area found the following similarities: (1) most were special, "one-time" assessments; (2) the content was broad-based, seeking information on teacher perceived needs in a wide range of areas; (3) a distinction was seldom made, or at least seldom reported between teachers who have worked/are working with handicapped students and those who have not worked with handicapped students; and (4) in most studies the mailed survey approach was the sole data collection method employed.

In his survey of selected needs assessment studies, Thornton (1980) noted that although elements of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process were often alluded to in needs assessment surveys, scant attention has been given to the IEP specifically. This lack of focusing on the IEP process was felt to be problematic, in view of its importance in determining the type of program and special services to be provided to the handicapped student. In a recent investigation of the use of IEPs in vocational education, Smith and Hippel (1980) found that vocational education's involvement in the IEP has, at best, been minimal. In order to increase the quality, appropriateness and effectiveness of vocational education for handicapped students, these authors recommended:

- inclusion of vocational education personnel in all phases of the IEP process;
- familiarization, through inservice training of vocational education and special education personnel with the concepts, philosophies and perceptions of the two fields (i.e. vocational and special education); and
- improvement of communication and coordination between personnel in special and vocational education (p. 39).

Purpose of the Study

Given the importance attached to the IEP process in providing the most appropriate program for the handicapped learner, along with the emphasis being placed on inservice education as a means of helping vocational educators better serve handicapped students, the major purpose of this study was to examine the inservice needs of Vermont's mainstream and special vocational educators in relation to the IEP process. The two major objectives of this investigation were:

1. to examine the nature and degree of mainstream and special vocational educator involvement in the design, delivery and review of handicapped students' IEPs; and
2. to assess the inservice and program needs of mainstream vocational educators and Diversified Occupations (DO) Lab instructors in Vermont's fifteen area vocational centers.

Definitions

The following definitions are of terms frequently mentioned throughout this report.

Diversified Occupations: A regional special class program which provides instruction to students labeled educable mentally retarded (EMR). These programs usually consist of an academic and a vocational component. The vocational component includes two labs: a light lab and a heavy lab. The Light lab contains equipment and facilities to teach home maintenance and repair, basic nutrition, health care, and prevocational units in child care, health occupations, quantity foods and hotel/motel maintenance. The heavy lab is designed to contain equipment for teaching prevocational units in agriculture and the Trade and Industrial vocational occupations. The DO program is funded through the Vermont Division of Special Education. (Division of Special Education, Vermont State Department of Education, 1981, Montpelier, Vermont)

Mainstream Vocational Education Program: An organized course providing occupationally oriented classroom and lab instruction to a group of students, which includes students classified as being handicapped and students not so classified.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written statement, developed by a team of persons, indicating the specific program plans for each handicapped student. This plan is to be completed on at least an annual basis. (Federal Register, Section 104.182(f), October 3, 1977, Education for All Handicapped Children Act)

Vocational Resource Teacher (VRT): The VRT provides tutorial support services to handicapped and disadvantaged students with special learning needs in vocational education. The tutorial service focuses upon remediating the student's deficiencies in the applied math and communications skills required to succeed in the mainstream vocational program. This position, which is funded by the Vermont Division of Vocational-Technical Education, is frequently referred to as the Vocational Special Needs Teacher. (Division of Vocational Education, Vermont State Department of Education, 1981, Montpelier, Vermont)

II METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Information on vocational educator involvement and inservice needs relative to the IEP process was obtained through a combination of on-site interviews and mailed questionnaires. This information was collected from mainstream and special vocational education instructors, cooperative education coordinators, and vocational directors in Vermont's area vocational centers.

Conceptual Framework

The framework that guided the development of interview guides and survey instruments for this study was based on a process perspective of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). That is, the IEP was conceived as a sequential three-stage process, occurring within an annual timeframe.¹ A brief description of each stage follows:

- I. Development: Those activities and interactions that occur between vocational educator and IEP team prior to and during the preparation of the IEP document.
- II. Implementation: Activities and interactions occurring between vocational educator and IEP team during the delivery of the student's program.
- III. Review/Evaluation: Activities and interactions that take place between vocational educator and IEP team near or at the end of the school year. Student performance in relation to the IEP document is reviewed and evaluated, with a focus on determining the future education and employment needs of the student.

Instrumentation

The on-site interview and mailed survey instruments developed in this study consisted of a series of questions on the nature and extent of vocational educator involvement in the IEP effort and related inservice needs. The questions were framed for each of the three stages of the IEP process. A fourth section, titled "General," was included in the instruments to seek additional information on vocational educator use of support services, communication with parents of handicapped students and contact with community agencies serving handicapped persons.

The instruments were initially drafted by the project staff and subsequently revised following review by an advisory panel and pilot-testing with a small sample of regular and special vocational teachers (N=11). The project advisory panel consisted of representatives from vocational and special education at local and state levels and a parent representative from a consumer advocacy association.

¹For similar conceptual frameworks of the IEP process, see Phelps and Wentling, 1977; Albright, et. al. 1978; Phelps and Batchelor, 1979; Smith and Hippel, 1980.

A listing of these members appears in Appendix A. The advisory panel critiqued the instruments in terms of appropriateness, clarity, and thoroughness. The pilot test group was used by the project staff to check appropriateness and clarity of instrument items, response time and inter-rater reliability between the two project staff members. Similar checks were also made by these interviewers following each on-site visit.

The items in the on-site guide were broadly organized to facilitate a semi-structured interview approach. By comparison, the items in the mailed survey instrument were more detailed and structured. Copies of the guides used in interviewing special and mainstream vocational education teachers, cooperative education coordinators and vocational directors are shown in Appendices B, C, and D, respectively. A copy of the survey instrument sent to mainstream vocational education teachers appears in Appendix E. The survey instrument distributed to special vocational (DO) teachers is shown in Appendix F.

Data Collection

On-site interviewing took place in eight randomly selected area vocational centers. Four mainstream vocational teachers, a cooperative education coordinator, the vocational director and both of the special vocational lab instructors were individually interviewed at each center. The mainstream teachers interviewed were selected by a random rank ordering of all vocational teachers in the center, followed with a telephone call to each teacher until two teachers with IEP students and two teachers without IEP students were identified. The rationale for interviewing teachers with and without IEP students was to detect differences, if any, in perceived inservice training needs.

Survey questionnaires were sent to all mainstream and special vocational education teachers in Vermont's fifteen area vocational centers, with the exception of the forty-eight teachers who participated in the on-site interviews. A second round of surveys was sent to non-respondents three weeks after the initial mailing.

Sample

Through the combined techniques of on-site interview and mailed questionnaire, an attempt was made to survey all mainstream and special vocational teachers from the area vocational centers in Vermont. Of the 299 teachers possible, a total of 214 participated in this study, which represents a 72% response rate.

Also included in the eight on-site visitations were individual interviews with vocational directors (N=8) and cooperative education coordinators (N=8). The vocational directors were interviewed for the purpose of obtaining administrator perspectives on vocational education's involvement in the IEP process. The cooperative education coordinators were interviewed to identify their involvement with handicapped students and perceived inservice training needs.

III FINDINGS

The findings reported in this section are organized in terms of the five major categories that were listed in the on-site interview and mailed survey instruments. These are: (1) Demographic Information, (2) Program Development, (3) Implementation, (4) Review/Evaluation, and (5) General. Each category is described, followed by narrative summary and graphic presentations of the data.

Since the primary group of this investigation was vocational teachers, the findings reported in Part A are focused on this group. However, information gained from vocational director and cooperative education coordinator interviews are weaved into the reporting, especially in those areas dealing with IEP involvement and related inservice needs. In Part B, the findings from on-site interviews and mailed surveys from special vocational educators (DO lab instructors) are presented.

A. Mainstream, Vocational Educators

Demographic Information

This category provided information on the teacher's vocational area, years of experience in industry and education and extent of training and experience in working with handicapped students.

Of the 184 teachers responding, 137 or 74% stated that they have or have had handicapped students with IEPs in their programs. While this finding indicates a relatively high percentage of respondents experienced in working with handicapped students, an observation made during the on-site visitations suggests that the percentage may even be higher. When making arrangements for the on-site interviews, the teachers were asked if they were presently working with handicapped students. Of the sixteen teachers who indicated over the telephone that they had not worked with handicapped students, six (6) were, in fact, found to have IEP students in their classes when the on-site interviews took place. At the outset of these interviews, the teachers explained that when the term handicapped was mentioned during the phone conversation, they were equating it with only those students enrolled in DO programs and not considering other special education students.

Primary Teaching Area

A presentation of the respondents by vocational teaching area and status in working with IEP students appears in Table 1.

Table 1
 Respondents by Program Area and IEP Student Status
 (Total N=184)

<u>Vocational Area</u>	<u>No. of Teachers Responding</u>	<u>Teachers with IEP Students</u>	<u>Teachers without IEP Students</u>
1 Trade and Industrial	60 (33%)	57 (42%)	3 (6%)
2 Home Economics	54 (29%)	33 (24%)	21 (45%)
3 Business Education/ Distributive Education	43 (23%)	26 (19%)	17 (36%)
4 Agriculture	15 (8%)	11 (8%)	4 (9%)
5 Health Occupations	12 (6%)	10 (7%)	2 (4%)

Of the 137 surveyed vocational teachers who had students with IEPs, 79 (58%) were male and 58 (42%) were female. Fifty-seven (42%) were Trade and Industrial teachers, thirty-three (24%) taught Home Economics, twenty-two (16%) were in Business Education, eleven (8%) were Agriculture instructors, ten (7%) were teaching Health Occupations, and four (3%) were in Distributive Education.

Of the 47 vocational educators who have not worked with IEP students, 32 (68%) were male and 15 (32%) were female. The primary teaching specialization of the vocational teachers include Home Economics 45% (21); Business Education, 32% (15); Agriculture, 9% (4); Trade and Industrial, 9% (4); Health Occupations 4% (2); and Distributive Education, 4% (2).

Experience in Education

As seen in Table 2, the vocational teachers with IEP and without IEP students share a similar number of years in education. The median rank for both groups was 7-10 years of experience in education.

Table 2

<u>Experience in Education</u>	<u>(N=135)</u>		<u>(N=36)</u>	
	<u>YES</u>	<u>IEP</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>IEP</u>
1-3 years	35	(26%)	6	(17%)
4-6 years	21	(16%)	7	(19%)
7-10 years	35	(26%)	9	(25%)
11-15 years	25	(19%)	7	(19%)
more than 15 years	19	(14%)	7	(19%)
unknown	--	--	11	
MEDIAN	7-10 years		7-10 years	

Experience in Industry

As shown in Table 3, both groups of vocational teachers had varied amounts of experience in working in business or industry. There appeared to be no distinct differences in number of years of experience between the teachers who have had students on IEPs and those who have not. Of particular interest, however, is the fact that nearly a quarter or more of the vocational educators have not only taught for several years but have worked more than 15 years outside of the school setting.

Table 3

Experience in Industry	(N=132)		(N=37)	
	YES	IEP	NO	IEP
1-3 years	27	(20%)	8	(22%)
4-6 years	21	(16%)	5	(14%)
7-10 years	21	(16%)	6	(16%)
11-15 years	18	(14%)	3	(8%)
more than 15 years	31	(23%)	11	(30%)
none	14	(11%)	4	(11%)
unknown	--	--	10	
	7-10 years		7-10 years	

Coursework Regarding Handicapped Students

In looking at the two groups of teachers, 68% of teachers with IEP students have not taken courses in the education of special needs students. Seventy-six percent of the teachers without IEP students have not taken related coursework. A more detailed breakdown of each group follows. Of the 135 vocational teachers, 43 (32%) who have or have had students with IEPs reported having taken some college coursework regarding handicapped students. Twenty-seven of the 43 did not take the courses as part of a degree program. Six people reported including courses on the handicapped in their Bachelor's program, eight in their Master's program and one in an Advanced Graduate program.

Of the 37 vocational teachers surveyed through the mail who have not had IEP students, 28 (76%) had not taken any college coursework pertaining to instructing handicapped students. The nine (24%) who had some coursework on this subject reportedly took these courses within the last five years. Four of the nine did not take the classes for a degree, two applied the courses to a Bachelor's degree, two took the courses for a Master's degree, and one applied the coursework to an Advanced Graduate program.

Workshops Regarding Handicapped Students

Ninety-four of the 137 teachers with IEP students (71%) had not participated in any workshops on vocational instruction for handicapped students in the last five years. Of the thirty-nine who had attended one or more workshops, twenty-one said they were sponsored by the local district. Fifteen were offered through a

college or university, ten were sponsored by the State Department of Education while two were through a professional organization.

Seventy-three percent (73%) or 27 of the vocational teachers surveyed who have not had students with IEPs reported no involvement in workshops related to serving handicapped students. The remaining 10 teachers who have participated in such workshops have taken them through the following organizations: college or university (3), local district (4), State Department of Education (4), and professional organization (1).

Program Development.

The questions under this category sought information on the vocational teacher's role in the student placement decision and in the preparation of the vocational component of an IEP. In addition, one question dealt with perceived inservice needs in relation to developing the vocational component of the IEP.

As indicated in Table 4, a slight majority of vocational teachers reported being involved in the placement decisions (56%) and in the development of the IEPs (61%) for handicapped students. However, most vocational teachers stated that their involvement was of an informal nature. Interviews on-site revealed that most informal contacts were with personnel in the area vocational center who were working with handicapped students in a special vocational program (DO). Rarely did a vocational teacher report being involved in placement or IEP development for students who were receiving specialized services from sending schools. Only 17 of the 184 teachers reported having been a participant in IEP meetings, which represents less than 10% of the total vocational teacher group directly involved with the IEP team in establishing the vocational component of the IEP.

Table 4
Involvement in IEP Development

(135) What is your role in the placement of handicapped student in your vocational class?

(75) 56% - involved in placement decision

(60) 44% - not involved in placement decision

(136) What input do you provide the Basic Staffing Team in developing the vocational program for the handicapped learner?

(83) 61% - provides input for development of IEP

(53) 39% - no involvement in development of IEP

For the 61% that reportedly provided input into IEP development, this input was most often in the form of helping set vocational goals and objectives for the student. Along these lines, the vocational teachers were queried as to whether they had a list of competencies or objectives for their program. The collective responses to these questions are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

(129) Is there a checklist of competencies or objectives that you use in your vocational program?

(109) 84% - Yes

(20) 16% - No

(105) Do you use these competencies/objectives to help develop the vocational component of the student's IEP?

(80) 76% - Yes

(25) 24% - No

Several teachers also mentioned being involved in assessing student's entry level skills and in determining how and when student progress is to be measured and reported.

Cooperative education coordinators interviewed at eight area vocational centers were asked what role they might play in the development of an IEP. The majority indicated no real need for them to be present at IEP meetings. However, these coordinators did express a desire to be given more background information on an IEP student who is being referred to their capstone program for on-the-job training. They perceived this type of information to be essential when describing the student to potential employers.

Regarding areas of inservice need relative to developing the vocational component of the IEP, the vocational teachers with and without IEP students expressed no overwhelming need for training in one particular area, as can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6

In what areas in planning the vocational aspects of the student's IEP do you feel you would like additional training in?

	Teachers with IEP students (N=134)	Teachers without IEP students (N=47)
-adapting course objectives	45% (60)	36% (17)
-identifying appropriate instruction materials and activities	42% (57)	28% (13)
-assessing student's present level of performance	34% (47)	28% (13)
-knowing available school and community resources	24% (32)	23% (11)
-writing student objectives	18% (24)	19% (9)
-modifying the lab environment	15% (20)	6% (3)
-program purpose	1% (1)	- (0)
-no answer	14% (19)	43% (20)

As indicated in Table 6, the three most frequently stated needs by vocational teachers with and without IEP students were learning how to: (1) adapt course objectives (45%); (2) identify appropriate instructional materials and activities (42%); and (3) assess student's present level of performance (34%). It should be noted that on the mailed survey, 20.43% of teachers without IEP students did not provide a response to this question. One non-respondent possibly explained this situation when he said, "Since I have never been involved, I do not know where my weaknesses lie."

When the eight cooperative education coordinators were asked what skills or information they might need in order to become involved in the IEP development phase, their responses indicated no need for training per se. They explained that their exposure to, and involvement with IEP students was extremely limited. None of the co-op coordinators reported specific knowledge of the number of IEP students in cooperative work placements.

What the co-op coordinators reiterated was the need to know the capabilities of and expectations for a particular student before they speak with potential employers.

The vocational teachers interviewed were asked to identify the greatest inhibitors to providing input into the development of the student's IEP. Almost half cited a lack of communication between vocational and special educators as the major obstacle to cooperative planning. On the other hand, almost half of the interviewees indicated no major problems with the present system of providing input to the IEP team. Some of these teachers did not provide input to the IEP planning team, nor did they perceive the need to do so.

Implementation

The central question under this category was "What are the areas you feel need to be strengthened in terms of helping you provide vocational instruction to handicapped students?"

As seen from the mailed survey responses in Table 7, the six most frequently stated needs by teachers with and without IEP students were: (1) modifying instructional materials; (2) assessing and evaluating student performance; (3) strategies for improving student attitudes and self-concept; (4) motivating and reinforcing handicapped students; (5) individualizing instruction; and (6) utilizing alternative teaching strategies.

Table 7

What are the areas you feel need to be strengthened in terms of helping you provide vocational instruction to handicapped students?

	Teachers with IEP Students (N=137)	Teachers Without IEP Students (N=47)
1-modifying instructional materials	35% (48)	19% (9)
2-assessing and evaluating student performance	34% (47)	21% (10)
3-strategies for improving student attitudes and self concept	33% (45)	28% (13)
4-individualizing instruction	29% (40)	32% (15)
5-motivating and reinforcing handicapped students	30% (41)	19% (9)
6-alternate teaching techniques and strategies	29% (40)	34% (16)
7-working with support personnel	15% (20)	17% (8)
8-working with parents	13% (18)	4% (2)
9-understanding handicapping conditions	4% (6)	11% (5)
10-how to work with industry	2% (3)	2% (1)
11-grading strategies	1% (1)	-
12-time management	1% (1)	-
no answer	18% (24)	30% (14)

During the on-site interviews, roughly half of the teachers expressed the need to strengthen skills in individualizing instruction. It was also noted that the problem areas often mentioned by the teachers and administrators interviewed were quite similar except for one area. Most administrators thought their instructors needed to know more about handicapping conditions. They stated this as the highest priority for inservice of vocational teachers, yet as can be seen on Table 7, the vocational teachers ranked this need ninth. However, eight areas of inservice need were listed on the mailed survey. Understanding handicapping conditions was not among the areas listed. Eight teachers who indicated this need were interviewed on-site. Had this area been included in the list of inservice areas on the mailed survey, a higher teacher response may have occurred.

As indicated from survey and interview responses, the perceived needs of vocational teachers with and without experience in working with IEP students were in similar areas. However, a rank ordering of the six areas by highest to lowest percentage response for each group suggests a slight difference in the frequency of perceived need between the groups. For teachers with IEP students, the two most frequently cited areas were related to modifying instructional materials and assessing and evaluating student performance. In contrast, these two areas appeared in the fourth and fifth rank for teachers without IEP students. This observation is shown on Table 8.

Given the relatively low percentages on the most frequently mentioned items in Tables 7 and 8, and the fact that a combined total of 25% of the mailed survey and on-site interview respondents did not provide an answer or answers to the central question suggests caution in making judgements about particular areas of inservice need for vocational teachers in the State.

Table 8

Rank Order of Needs
By Teachers with and without IEP Students

<u>Teachers with IEP Students (137)</u>	<u>Teachers without IEP Students (47)</u>
1 modifying instructional materials (35%)	1 alternate teaching techniques and strategies (34%)
2 assessing and evaluating student performance (34%)	2 individualizing instruction (32%)
3 strategies to improve student attitude and self concept (33%)	3 strategies to improve student attitude and self concept (33%)
4 individualizing instruction (29%)	4 assessing and evaluating student performance (21%)
5 motivating and reinforcing H.S. (30%)	5 modifying instructional material (19%)
6 alternate teaching techniques and strategies (29%)	6 motivating and reinforcing H.S. (19%)
no answer (18%)	no answer (30%)

Review/Evaluation

The information sought under the review/evaluation category was in regard to strategies used and information collected in reviewing student progress. Information provided to the IEP team by the vocational instructor was another item examined in this category. All responses reported in this section are based on those teachers who indicated having IEP students in their programs.

As can be seen in Table 9, nearly all teachers reported assessing and documenting the performance of their students.

Table 9.

- (102) Is assessment information documented?
(93) 91% - Yes
(9) 9% - No
- (117) Are the assessment procedures different for handicapped students?
(64) 55% - Yes
(53) 45% - No

Seven (7) methods of assessment were described and were usually used in a combination of ways. The assessment methods used included: written tests, minimum competencies, checklists, oral exams, observation (hands-on), student self evaluation, and final product evaluation.

When asked if any of these assessment methods would be different for handicapped students, a slight majority (55%) stated there would be no difference. However, 45% said that they use different procedures with students. Several comments below illustrate what seems to be two different philosophies for modifying the assessment procedures for handicapped students.

The first group of statements reflect a slight modification in the assessment procedures to accommodate needs of individual handicapped students.

- "I have the same general expectations of all my students; however, written assignments have been modified in some cases."
- "Oral testing when needed -- otherwise try to mainstream student the same as everyone else in class."
- "More flexible - less demanding on time limits."
- "It depends on the handicap...."

The second group of statements suggests a substantially different philosophy in how handicapped students should be assessed in mainstreamed settings.

- "The objectives I expect these students to reach are at a basic understanding level, and not to be compared to normal students."
- "I place a much stronger weight on attitude and verbal skills -- cooperation in class and active participation."
- "They cannot use very complicated equipment...."
- "Primarily graded on effort, attitude and homework passed in (attempted)."
- "Standards in skills are lower."

The vocational teachers' responses to the question on the type of information they provide the IEP team can be seen in Table 10. The majority of vocational teachers mentioned reporting student grades, progress on vocational skill development, and student behavior to the IEP team.

Table 10

(103) What information do you provide the IEP team during and at the end of the year?

- (79) 58% • student grades
- (73) 53% • student progress on vocational skill development
- (72) 53% • student behavior and social status
- (44) 32% • recommendations for work placement or further training
- (35) 26% • have not provided information to IEP team
- (11) 8% • no answer
- (2) 1% • interim reports

When interviewing the teachers on-site, they explained that the information is usually provided to the IEP team through informal contacts. This sharing seems to be far greater among vocational and DO teachers at the area center than it is between area center vocational personnel and special educators from the sending schools.

When asked about their involvement in the follow-up of former students, an overwhelming majority of vocational teachers (80%) reported no involvement in this area.

Table 11

(117) Are you involved in the follow-up of students after they leave or complete your program?

(94)	80%	• No
(20)	18%	• Yes
(3)	2%	• New teacher (not applicable)

The vocational guidance coordinator, the vocational "office," guidance, and the co-op coordinator were given as examples of the people who are coordinating the student follow-up activities. Several teachers interviewed on-site who reported no formal involvement in follow-up activities commented that they have maintained informal contact with many of their former students. Two examples of the informal follow-up activities reported were: (1) one teacher explained that every year she plans a reunion party for all graduates of the previous year, and (2) another teacher stated that students have "dropped by just to let me know what they were doing with themselves."

General Information

The questions developed for this category sought information on the vocational educator's involvement with special services personnel, parents of handicapped students and organizations which serve handicapped individuals. Like the reporting in the previous category (Review/Evaluation), only those teachers who have or have had IEP students are included here.

The first major question which appears in Table 12 dealt with parental contact.

Table 12

(121) When do you have contact with the parents of the handicapped students in your class?

(56)	46%	• have contact during the year
(65)	54%	• have no contact during the year

Of interest here is that 54% of the vocational teachers with IEP students in their classes reported having no contact with the parents of those students. The 46% who do have contact with parents during the year do so in a variety of ways. Telephone calls were the most frequent and direct form

of contact mentioned by the vocational teachers. This usually occurred in response to a student problem. In terms of indirect contacts, most teachers indicated sending parents/interim reports, quarterly demerit reports or warning reports so that the status of the student is known.

As seen in Table 13, the majority of vocational teachers reported utilizing a variety of support services in their school.

Table 13

(137) Which ~~supportive~~ services in your school are you using to help the handicapped student succeed in your class(es)?

- (92) 67% • remedial teachers and aides
- (74) 54% • consultation with special education teachers
- (42) 31% • vocational guidance
- (40) 29% • guidance counselors
- (6) 4% • none

However, the vocational resource teacher (VRT) was frequently cited as the service most often used by vocational teachers. Many vocational teachers expressed satisfaction in referring students with learning difficulties to the VRT because he/she is readily accessible and the remediation is vocationally oriented.

The vocational teachers also described using two types of aides in their labs. An aide from the Diversified Occupations program often works with a DO student to help the student make the transition from the special class to the mainstream vocational setting. In addition, other vocational lab aides work with non-DO students in vocational classes. These aides typically work with students who are having difficulties with the academic components of the program. Other support services frequently used are vocational guidance and general guidance personnel.

In terms of vocational teacher knowledge of support services, several teachers knew who the various support personnel were, but were uncertain as to the scope of their responsibilities and activities.

As can be seen in Table 14, the vocational teachers were also asked if they have had contact with personnel from agencies that provide services to handicapped individuals.

Table 14

(127) Have you had contact with personnel from agencies or organizations that provide services to handicapped individuals?

- (110) 87% • No
- (17) 13% • Yes

With the recent emphasis on interagency cooperation between and among Vocational Rehabilitation, Special Education, and Vocational Education, one might expect the vocational educators to have contact with these agencies. However,

this generally appears not to be the case. The vast majority (87%) of the teachers said they have had no contact with agencies which serve handicapped individuals. Several vocational teachers suggested that this was a role and responsibility of the special educator. However, the organizations mentioned by 13% of those surveyed were usually found to be helpful. Vocational Rehabilitation, local Mental Health Centers, Counseling Services, and Vermont Job Service were among the agencies noted by the respondents.

In addition to agencies assisting the handicapped, the vocational teachers interviewed on-site were asked if they knew of businesses in the area which employed handicapped people. The question was raised to determine if the vocational teachers were aware of employment opportunities for people with handicaps. Nearly half of the interviewees said yes and named one or more businesses. Eighteen percent said yes, but couldn't or didn't name a specific place of employment. Forty-one percent (41%) said they did not know of any businesses that train or employ handicapped individuals. These data tend to accentuate the findings from the follow-up question reported earlier, which revealed that 80% of the teachers surveyed were not involved in determining the employment status of former students.

B. Diversified Occupations Lab Instructors

Demographic Information

This category provided information on the lab instructors' years of experience in industry and education, and extent of training and experience in working with handicapped students.

Experience in Education

The DO lab educators surveyed on-site and through the mail reported the following number of years experience in the teaching field: 35% (10) had 4-6 years of experience, 17% (5) have taught for 7-10 years, 14% (4) have 11-15 years of experience, and 14% (4) have been teaching for more than 15 years. The median rank was 2, that is, 4-6 years of experience in education.

Experience in Industry

Roughly two-thirds of the DO lab teachers (70%) reported having worked in business or industry for varying amounts of time. Many accumulated this experience prior to entering the teaching field. Thirty-five percent (11) had 1-3 years of experience, 14% (4) reported having worked 4-6 years, 10% (3) had worked in industry 7-10 years and 10% had worked in business or industry for 11-15 years. No one reported more than 15 years of experience in industry. Thirty percent (9) of the respondents reported having no experience working in business or industrial settings.

Sex

Sixteen (53%) of the DO lab instructors surveyed were male and fourteen (47%) were female. The heavy lab teacher was male in all fifteen DO programs. In 14 of the 15 DO programs, the light lab teacher was female.

Coursework Concerning Vocational Instruction for Handicapped Students

Eighty-three percent of the DO lab instructors reported having taken courses dealing with vocational instruction for their students. Of the 17 teachers who described the purpose for taking this coursework, 35% reported applying the coursework towards a Bachelor's degree, and 35% took them for a Master's degree. Thirty percent of the teachers did not apply the courses towards a degree program.

Workshops Taken Concerning Vocational Instruction for Handicapped Students

Sixty-one percent of the DO lab instructors reported participation in workshops on vocational instruction for handicapped students during the last five years. An overwhelming majority of the workshops taken (88%) were sponsored by the State Department of Education. Workshops offered through a college or university were attended by 38% of the responding teachers while 19% had been to workshops in their local school district, and 13% of the educators had participated in workshops sponsored by a professional organization.

Eleven, or approximately 40% of the 29 DO lab teachers said they had not taken any workshops within the last five years on vocational instruction for handicapped learners.

Program Development

The questions under this category sought information on the DO lab teacher's role in the student placement decision and in the preparation of the vocational component of an IEP. In addition, one question dealt with perceived inservice needs in relation to developing the vocational component of the IEP.

The 16 lab teachers interviewed on-site explained that all DO students were scheduled to take the light and heavy lab classes for at least the first year enrolled in the program. Some students are enrolled in the light and/or heavy lab classes for up to four or five years. The teachers stated that a student is placed in a mainstream vocational course only when he/she exhibits mastery of the DO lab competencies. It was found that 90% of the lab instructors were involved in IEP meetings at the time the placement decision was made. Three teachers (10%) reported no involvement in the initial IEP meeting or in the placement decision. However, two of the three teachers indicated they do provide related vocational information to the IEP team. A breakout of this information appears in Table 15.

Table 15

(N=30) What is your role in the placement of a handicapped student in your lab?

-involvement in initial IEP meeting as part of Basic Staffing Team	90%	(27)
-review IEP after it's developed, and comment on it before parent approval	--	(0)
-have not attended Basic Staffing Team meetings but have provided input regarding placement	--	(0)
-have had no role in placement decision (placement is automatic)	10%	(3)

As seen in Table 16, all of the teachers who have competencies for their lab use those competencies in IEP development. Often a printed copy of the competencies or objectives is attached to the IEP document.

Table 16

(N=30) Is there a checklist of objectives or competencies that you use for your lab?

Yes	90%	(27)
No	10%	(3)

(N=26) Are these objectives or competencies used to develop the vocational aspects of the IEP?

Yes	100%	(27)
No	--	(0)

Table 17 provides information on the areas in which DO lab instructors provide input to the IEP team. One lab teacher visited on-site reported having no involvement in developing vocational objectives for the IEP. The teacher explained that there was no vocational component in the IEPs of DO students at this vocational center.

Table 17

(N=30) What input do you provide the IEP team in developing the vocational program for the handicapped learner in your lab?

-assess student's entry level skills	90%	(27)
-determine vocational goals and objectives	97%	(29)
-identify special support services	90%	(27)
-determine method of assessment	87%	(26)
-have had no involvement in development of vocational component of IEP	3%	(1)

The 16 lab instructors interviewed on-site were also asked to comment on what they saw as problems or obstacles to providing input into a student's IEP. Six or 38% of the teachers expressed satisfaction with the procedures currently used in IEP development. However, some instructors reported lack of time, inadequate evaluation and assessment techniques and inadequate curriculum as obstacles to providing input into the IEP. Also mentioned as a problem was the teachers' lack

of adequate preparation in vocational education.

In terms of inservice needs related to planning the vocational component, 60% (18) indicated needing help in finding appropriate instructional materials. The specific responses to training needs appear in Table 18 below.

Table 18

(N=30) In what areas in planning the vocational aspects of the IEP do you feel you would like additional training in?

-identifying appropriate instructional materials and activities	60%	(18)
-assessing student's level of performance	33%	(10)
-modifying the lab environment	27%	(8)
-knowing available school and community resources	20%	(6)
-writing student objectives	17%	(5)
-no answer or no expressed need or inappropriate response	37%	(10)

Some teachers expressed the need to adapt many commercially produced instructional materials so that a DO student could better understand the content. Several teachers interviewed on-site indicated the need to know more about mainstream vocational education curriculum. Specifically, they wanted to know the prerequisite skills for mainstream vocational classes, specific content and skills needed to teach vocational education, and "what curriculum would be most appropriate in preparing students for employment."

The second most frequently reported need was in the area of vocational skill assessment and evaluation. It is also interesting to note that 37% of the lab teachers chose not to respond to this question or indicated no need for training in providing input into the IEP.

Implementation

The central question under this category was, "What are the areas you feel need to be strengthened in terms of helping you provide vocational instruction to handicapped students?"

As seen in Table 19, the three most frequently reported areas of need for inservice training by the lab teachers (27) were: (1) ways of using a variety of teaching techniques and strategies; (2) modifying instructional materials; and (3) assessing and evaluating student performance. During the on-site interviews the lab teachers repeatedly expressed a need for vocationally-oriented materials. Several teachers cited the need for tips or techniques to teach reading and math in particular. Evaluation and assessment methods or procedures was also of a high priority for many lab teachers interviewed. Supporting this need, one instructor said, "Many resources are inadequate. The DO population is constantly changing. We're getting lower functioning kids and kids with emotional problems."

Some DO lab teachers also expressed the need for learning more about vocational education, vocational curriculum design and teaching vocational skills in their lab. Several DO lab teachers said they emphasized daily living skills, often because the vocational facility was inadequate or they don't have the vocational skills to teach the lab in a vocational context.

Table 19

(N=30) What are the areas you feel need to be strengthened in terms of helping you provide vocational instruction to students in your lab?

-using a variety of teaching techniques and strategies	37%	(11)
-modifying instructional materials	33%	(10)
-assessing and evaluating student performance	33%	(10)
-helping handicapped students develop positive attitudes about themselves and work	27%	(8)
-working with parents of handicapped students	23%	(7)
-providing individualized instruction in the lab	20%	(6)
-motivating and reinforcing handicapped students	17%	(5)
-vocational education curriculum development	17%	(5)
-working with support personnel	13%	(4)
-handicapping conditions	7%	(2)
-indirect work behaviors	7%	(2)
-how to work with industry	3%	(1)
-sign language	3%	(1)
-grading procedures	3%	(1)
-no answer, or none	10%	(3)

In addition to the facilities problem, the instructors visited on-site (16) were also asked to identify the greatest problems or obstacles for providing vocational instruction to their students. The lack of a lab aide and the low reading and math abilities of many students were mentioned as obstacles to teaching vocational skills. Several teachers said the students do fine with the "hands-on" activities but encounter many difficulties with academic tasks. Other problems cited by the lab teachers interviewed on-site include: student lack of motivation, the movement towards enrolling lower functioning (TMR) students into DO, and the student's entry into the DO program with inadequate career exploratory experiences.

Review/Evaluation

The information sought under the review/evaluation category is related to strategies used and information collected in reviewing student progress. Information provided to the IEP team by the lab instructor and involvement in follow-up activities were other items examined in this category.

Table 20 provides a graphic presentation of teacher responses to the major review/evaluation questions.

Table 20

(N=30) What information do you provide the IEP team during and at the end of the year?

-student behavior and social status	80%	(24)
-student progress on vocational skill development	77%	(23)
-recommendations for work placement or further training	70%	(21)
-student grades	60%	(18)
-have not provided information to IEP team	7%	(2)

(N=28) Are you involved in the follow-up of students after they complete the DO program?

89%	(25)	• No
7%	(2)	• Yes
4%	(1)	• Uncertain (new teacher)

Nearly all of the lab instructors surveyed reportedly met with the IEP team at various times during the year to discuss student behavior and social status (80%), student progress on vocational skill development (77%), recommendations for work placement or further training (70%) and student grades (60%). Two teachers (7%) reported they provide no information to the IEP team during or at the end of the year.

Regarding the follow-up of students when they leave the DO program, 89% (25) reported having no personal involvement in this activity. Several teachers said this was typically done on an informal basis by the DO job coordinator. Some teachers explained that former students would sometimes stop by the school or would write letters informing the teachers of their whereabouts. Two people (7%) who were involved in following-up former students have been doing so since 1972. The information they collect has, however, not been documented.

DO lab teachers were also asked to explain their methods for measuring or assessing student performance. Nearly three-quarters of this group reported using informal observation as the primary means of assessing student performance. Eleven (38%) instructors reportedly used competency checklists when observing student performance. Though many teachers relied on informal observation, some explained they were not entirely comfortable with this procedure. One educator stated, "Unfortunately, a lot is through teacher observation; I think to be less subjective I need to develop a more specific checklist of competencies." In addition to informal observation and related competency checklists, a variety of other methods was cited as being supplemental for assessing student performance. These included written tests, oral exams, student self checks, and written assignments.

When interviewed as to what problems or obstacles inhibit the DO lab teachers from successfully evaluating a student's performance, two types of problems were reported. The limitations in many assessment procedures used was cited as an obstacle in "truly knowing" what the student can and can not do. Four teachers explained that the lack of specific assessment guidelines leads to the subjective evaluations. Inconsistency in student performance was mentioned by several instructors as the second type of problem encountered when assessing student's performance. Five teachers reported having little or no problem in assessing and evaluating a student's performance.

General Information

The questions developed for this category sought information on the DO lab educator's involvement with other special services personnel, parents of their students, and organizations or agencies which serve handicapped individuals.

The thirty DO lab teachers surveyed were asked about having contact with the parents of their students. As seen in Table 21, nearly all instructors reportedly meet with the parents sometime during the year. Communicating with parents during the annual review of their child's IEP was the most frequently mentioned form of contact. The majority (80%) mentioned meeting or speaking with parents during the course of the year as well. This contact was often through telephone conversations, letters and social gatherings such as the Special Olympics. Several teachers also mentioned making home visits during the school year and summer.

Table 21

(N=30) When do you have contact with parents of the students in your lab?

-during the development of the IEP	87%	(26)
-during the course of the year	80%	(24)
-at the annual review of the IEP	90%	(27)
-at open house	3%	(1)
-at social gatherings	3%	(1)
-have no contact with parents	7%	(2)

The lab instructors were asked to indicate the support services from within the school system currently being utilized. As shown in Table 22, twelve or 40% of the teachers stated that the only services used were those from the DO program itself. Of the 18 (60%) instructors utilizing support services in DO and in other areas, more than half reported tapping the services of remedial teacher and aides and guidance counselors. Other services mentioned less frequently included consultation with mainstream vocational educators, psychological services and adaptive physical education.

Table 22

(N=30) What support services in your school are you using to help the student succeed in your lab?

- Use of DO services only	40%	(12)
- Use of support services beyond those within DO program	60%	(18)
Areas:		
• remedial teachers and aides	66%	(12)
• guidance counselors	55%	(10)
• consultation with mainstream vocational teachers and cooperative education coordinators	39%	(7)
• psychological services	10%	(3)
• adaptive physical education	3%	(1)

During the on-site interviews, the 16 DO lab instructors explained the type and quality of contact with mainstream vocational educators. Thirteen or 81% reported having direct contact with mainstream vocational personnel, often of an informal nature and equally initiated by the mainstream and DO teachers. Overall, the majority of the DO lab instructors interviewed expressed satisfaction about their interactions with mainstream vocational educators. Several adjectives used by the DO teachers to describe these interactions included, "friendly," "frequent contact," "good support," and "they know many kids they've never had in their courses." Sample comments from the three DO instructors who indicated having limited contact with mainstream vocational teachers were, "hardly any contact," "minimal, very little," and "should be more coordination."

In addition to identifying the support services used within the school, the lab teachers (30) were asked about their contact with agencies or organizations in the community which provide services to handicapped individuals. Their responses can be seen in Table 23.

Table 23

(N=26) Have you had contact with personnel from agencies or organizations that provide services to handicapped individuals?

Yes 88% (23)
No 12% (3)

<u>Organization</u>	<u># of Teachers Reporting per Agency</u>
Vocational Rehabilitation	20
Local Mental Health Center	15
Social Rehabilitation Services	4
Vermont Job Service	3
UVM Center for Developmental Disabilities (I-Team)	2
Champlain Industries	2
HÔPE (VR)	1
Association for the Blind	1
Association for Retarded Citizens	1
Vermont Achievement Center	1
CETA	1
Champlain Work and Training	1
Job Corp	1
Local hospital	1
Local opportunity center	1
UVM Extension Service	1
VR JOYAL School	1
Cerebral Palsy Association	1
Surrogate Parent Program	1
Winston-Francis Center	1

Twenty-three or 88% of the 26 lab instructors reported having some sort of contact with the organizations listed in Table 23. The teachers' experiences with these agencies were extremely varied, but in terms of the two agencies most frequently cited, two nearly opposite reactions were observed. As many reported Mental Health and Vocational Rehabilitation Services as being helpful as there were in the not helpful category. The following comments illustrate the divergent response to Mental Health Services.

- "Mental Health is not very good at all...they were coming in and taking kids out of school without telling us."

- "We're in contact with the local mental health center all the time...we have a tight rapport."

Below are two quotes which illustrate the different response to Vocational Rehabilitation services.

- "...very helpful working with students who are not working out in our DO program."

- "...one of our lower functioning students was turned down by Vocational Rehabilitation because she was unable to vocalize a career interest."

The lab teachers visited on-site (16) were asked to comment on whether they knew of any businesses in their area which help train or employ handicapped individuals. A slight majority (9) identified one or more businesses that have worked cooperatively with the DO program by providing workstudy or on-the-job training opportunities. Two teachers said there were likely to be businesses that employed handicapped people, but were unable to identify any by name. Another two teachers weren't sure of any businesses, but suggested that the DO job coordinator would be better able to provide this information. Five teachers knew of no businesses that trained or employed handicapped individuals in their immediate geographical area.

IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report offers a series of conclusions and recommendations relative to mainstream and special vocational educator involvement in the IEP process and the perceived inservice needs of these educators in individualized programming for handicapped youth. Conclusions and recommendations regarding mainstream and special vocational educators are discussed separately in two parts (A and B). The third and final part of this section (C) provides recommendations that apply to both groups of teachers.

A. Mainstream Vocational Teachers

Involvement in IEP Process

It was found that slightly over half of the mainstream vocational education teachers were involved in the development of IEPs for handicapped students. This involvement was essentially through indirect means, via communication with special education personnel. Seldom were vocational teachers directly involved as participants of IEP meetings. In terms of areas of involvement in IEP development, vocational teachers most often reported providing input in establishing vocational goals and objectives for the student. Several teachers also mentioned involvement in assessing the student's entry level skills and in determining student progress measures and timelines.

The finding that vocational teachers seldom serve as participants in IEP meetings is consistent with the findings from similar studies conducted in New Jersey (Albright and Hux, 1979) and Texas (Fair, 1980). However, the present investigation found a larger percentage of vocational educators having contact with special education personnel during the IEP development phase. While this observation suggests that more vocational educators are at least having an indirect involvement in IEP development, it may also be misleading. Most vocational teacher contact was found to be with personnel from the Diversified Occupations (DO) program, which is a regionally-based secondary level special education class located in the area vocational centers. Virtually no direct contact reportedly occurred between mainstream vocational personnel at the area centers and special education personnel from the sending schools. This lack of communication is problematic when considering that handicapped students other than those in the DO program are also enrolled in mainstream vocational education programs, and that the largest segment of handicapped students and special education personnel reside at the sending schools. However, during the on-site interviews at eight area vocational centers, three vocational centers were observed to be in the process of formalizing procedures for developing the vocational component of the IEP with sending schools. A fourth vocational center had recently hired a special needs teacher to work with special education students and teachers from its sending schools. This movement implied increased communication between area vocational center and sending school personnel. Future investigation of these efforts could be helpful in determining their relative merits and shortcomings, in terms of providing vocational education and special services to handicapped students and facilitating coordinated practices among personnel from area center and sending schools.

The patterns of communication between vocational and special education personnel noted in the preceding paragraphs were similarly found during the implementation and review/evaluation phases of the IEP process. Those vocational teachers reporting contact with special educators mentioned that this contact was typically made on an informal basis and most often involved a reporting of student grades, student progress in vocational skill development and/or student behavior in the vocational education program.

Vocational resource teachers and aides at the vocational centers are apparently fulfilling an important role in providing services to handicapped students enrolled in mainstream vocational programs. A majority of the vocational teachers with handicapped students reported utilizing the services of these personnel. Moreover, many vocational instructors offered positive comments about the immediate availability of these support services personnel for specialized assistance and the relevance of the tutorial help provided to the instruction that occurs in the vocational course. While the scope of study did not include a focus on the role of vocational resource personnel in area vocational centers, the many references made about the quantity and quality of their work during the on-site interviews suggested a need for the state funding agency, the Division of Vocational-Technical Education, to examine this area more closely, especially since these positions are relatively recent additions to Vermont's vocational education delivery system.

Slightly less than half of the vocational teachers with IEP students reported having some communication with the parents of these students. Many teachers indicated that such communication occurred through indirect means (e.g., sending progress reports, grades, disciplinary notices). Given the active role that parents are to assume in the IEP effort and the limited contact between area vocational center and sending school personnel noted in this study, one wonders how and to what extent are parents informed of vocational education options for their children. Parent knowledge of and involvement in vocational education appears to be another area that could benefit from closer examination.

Inservice Needs

Roughly half of the mainstream vocational teachers reported having had coursework or workshops in vocational programming for handicapped students within the past five years. It was also noted that participation in coursework was much greater than workshop involvement. Since the state divisions of vocational and special education and the university departments of vocational and special education had recently intensified their efforts in this inservice area, the moderate rate of vocational teacher participation in special needs inservice activities is likely to increase.

As seen in Tables 6, 7, and 8 in the Findings section, vocational teachers with students on IEPs and those without IEP students tend to be much alike in their perceptions of areas of inservice need. However, the strength of this comparison was weakened, due to a substantial percentage of teachers in the "teachers without IEP students" group that did not respond to questions on perceived inservice needs. If differences do exist between the two groups, they may be in terms of level of

instruction needed within particular content areas. That is, teachers without IEP students may need more awareness level training, whereas teachers with IEP students may profit more from skills-oriented training. However, it was also noted that when the teachers from both groups were combined, approximately 25% did not indicate any particular areas in need of improvement. If a rationale for inservice education is developed on the basis of the perceived needs of vocational teachers, then one-quarter of the mainstream teachers in this study are not likely to be participants of the inservice program.

B. Diversified Occupations

Involvement in IEP Process

When it comes to the decision to place a DO student in the light or heavy lab, nearly all of the lab instructors reported direct involvement in placement matters and also served as members of the IEP team. Only three instructors indicated no involvement in placement decisions. The majority of those teachers who participated as IEP team members provided information on course goals and objectives. They were also involved in assessing the student's entry level skills and identifying special support services.

As with the initial placement decision, almost all of the DO lab instructors communicated with the IEP team during and at the end of the year. In most cases, the information addressed student behavior, progress on vocational skill development, recommendations for work placement or further training, and student grades. Only two teachers reported no involvement in the IEP process during or at the end of the year.

It appears then that almost all of the lab instructors were involved with each phase of the IEP process. It was also found that the DO lab instructors frequently communicate with the parents of their students. This contact is usually through direct means. Given the nature and position of their job, one would expect to see the special education lab instructors highly involved in the IEP process. Indeed, this study confirmed this expectation.

Inservice Needs

The majority of lab instructors reported having taken courses and workshops regarding vocational instruction for handicapped students.

In planning the vocational component of the IEP, the majority of lab teachers noted a need for further training in the area of identifying appropriate instructional activities and materials. Several teachers expressed the need to know more about vocational curriculum development in the DO lab and the curriculum and procedures in mainstream vocational programs. While many lab teachers had taken vocationally-oriented courses or workshops in the last five years, there is an apparent need for future inservice efforts to focus on vocational curriculum and skill development activities and materials.

Regarding inservice needs for instructing handicapped students in a vocational area, the teachers' responses were extremely diverse. There appeared to be a number of inservice needs relative to teaching vocational skills, though no one area was cited as a pressing need. Perhaps the varying types and levels of students currently enrolled in DO programs is such that a DO teacher is required to use a wide variety of skills relevant to educating this diverse group. Given the fact that many needs were indicated and that differing program emphases were noted during interviews with several DO lab instructors, future statewide inservice planning efforts should take these considerations into account.

While discussing inservice and program needs on-site, several DO lab teachers from four different centers mentioned inadequate facilities as an inhibitor to teaching vocational skills. These teachers posited that even with inservice instruction on vocational skill training, they would still be unable to successfully carry through with the vocational instruction, given the facilities problem. This facilities concern seems to merit closer examination by state level personnel in special and vocational education. Given the observation that DO lab instructors tended to perceive themselves and their program as being separate from other programs in the area vocational center, procedures that encourage a greater level of collaboration among DO and mainstream vocational educators in the facilities area could help in improving the facilities concern and in achieving a higher level of integration between these programs.

One other discussion arose out of the inservice needs question that appears to warrant further examination. During the on-site interviews, a small number of DO instructors (6) were asked what they saw as the purpose of the DO lab. Three responded by saying that the main emphasis was on daily living skills or independent life skills. Two instructors reported the purpose as being pre-vocational skill training. Only one instructor said the program was designed for vocational training. At the onset of this study, the researchers assumed that DO lab was a special vocationally-oriented course for handicapped students. However, in light of the varying program purposes expressed, this assumption may be questionable. A statewide review of the DO program would be helpful in determining and clarifying the goals of the lab segment of Diversified Occupations.

C. General Recommendations

The inservice needs found in this study are reported on a statewide basis. This information should be helpful in developing agendas for state vocational and special education conferences, special workshops and university off-campus inservice courses. Furthermore, the instruments and procedures employed in this investigation could be used at the state level in developing a long-range plan for vocational special needs program improvement and inservice education. For example, the state divisions of vocational and special education could jointly sponsor a needs assessment system that collected data once every two years. This system would, therefore, maintain an ongoing account of special and mainstream vocational education inservice and program needs.

While statewide inservice needs information is reported in this publication, the data that were collected could also be analyzed for regional needs within the State. Persons interested in conducting a regional analysis of inservice and program needs could obtain the data from the present study by contacting the project director, Len Albright.

The instruments and procedures used in this study could also be utilized by area vocational centers. By conducting a locally directed survey, the area vocational centers would have a data base for developing vocational special needs program improvement and inservice plans. This information could also be communicated in the annual local plan report that each area vocational center submits to the State Division of Vocational-Technical Education. By aggregating the inservice and program needs information contained in these reports, the State could have another source for examining statewide needs.

V REFLECTIONS

Several reviewers of research reports (Everhart, 1977; Nicholson, et. al., 1977; Phelps, 1976) have noted that authors seldom reflect on the methods used in their investigations. The intent of this section is to offer such reflection. Observations on the conceptual framework, the instrumentation and the data collection and analysis procedures utilized in the present study are discussed. It is hoped this information will be of value to colleagues who are interested in the process of conducting studies similar to the one reported herein.

Conceptual Framework

A three-phase view of the IEP process (development, implementation, review/evaluation) served as the framework for the data collected in this study. The three-phase process perspective was helpful to the project staff in communicating the goals of the project and in organizing the on-site interview and mailed survey instruments. This perspective also seemed to be readily understood by the special vocational (DO lab) instructors, especially since nearly all were "living" the process. However, the interviews with mainstream vocational education personnel revealed that they tended to see the IEP more as a document than as a process. Though some reported indirect involvement in the IEP effort, most did not appear to view themselves as being part of a process. For these teachers, the conceptual framework offered another perspective on the IEP effort and probably was instructive in some cases. Yet, it could be that the process perspective employed in this study did more to identify problems or gaps within the present system, like inadequate information flow between area vocational centers and sending schools and individual teacher uncertainty about her/his role in the IEP process, than it did in uncovering the "real" inservice needs of mainstream vocational educators.

Instrumentation

The investigators experimented with one question on the mailed survey instrument to see if different response formats would produce similar or different outcomes. Question #16 asked the respondents to check from among a list of alternatives their perceived inservice needs in implementing the vocational component of the student's IEP. This format may be restrictive since the teacher's response is to a preconceived list of possibilities. Therefore, in four of the instruments sent to each area vocational center, the list was excluded in Question #16, providing a free-response format. What occurred was that of the 23 free response surveys returned, 13 or roughly 60% of the respondents chose not to respond or the responses did not address the question. This 60% figure was quite high when compared to the 18% (18 out of 100) non-response rate in the surveys which included the itemized list of alternatives. In an earlier study done in the vocational special needs area, Wentling and others (1978) found that "people tended to leave all the open-ended questions blank and sometimes responded incompletely or incorrectly to multiple choice items." The findings from the present study support this observation, in that the information obtained from the free response format was very limited. From those in the free response group that did address the question, the content responses were similar to the ones found in the itemized response list.

A second reflection on the instrumentation has to do with the narrow definition of inservice education inferred from the questions posed in the surveys. The first part of the survey sought information on the respondent's prior training in the vocational special needs area by asking about formal courses and workshops taken. Then, questions related to inservice needs appeared throughout the survey. During the interviewing process, several teachers mentioned that although they perceived no real need for formal courses or workshops in order to strengthen their skills, there was a great need and place for ongoing communication among colleagues about various aspects of programming for individual students. These comments suggested to the researchers that a broader view of inservice education, one that considered both formal and informal types of inservice, could have been reflected in the survey instrument. Had this occurred, then more information would have been gathered about the process of inservice education (e.g. what is it, who should deliver it, when, how) / along with the information obtained about the content of inservice education (i.e., areas of inservice need).

Data Collection and Analysis

The original plan for data collection was to conduct on-site interviews at four vocational centers, do telephone surveys of personnel from four other centers and send survey questionnaires to the remaining centers. However, once the average length of the individual interviews was determined and project staff schedules examined, a decision was made to extend the on-site interviews from four to eight vocational centers, delete the telephone interviews and send surveys to the rest of the centers. It was felt that by visiting additional centers and increasing the number of interviews with teachers, more in-depth information would be collected. While the additional on-site interviews were helpful in reinforcing many observations made during earlier interviews and, therefore, increased the researchers' level of confidence in making various points or judgements in this report, the on-site interviews were not as revealing as was anticipated. In fact, comments received from several respondents to the mailed survey provided as much or more information as that received during many of the on-site interviews. While several reasons for this occurrence have been considered, the open-ended nature of the questions asked during the on-site interviews and the interviewers' occasional failure to probe more deeply into specific areas seem to be central factors in not obtaining the indepth information that was expected.

The use of two different formats for data collection, an open-ended question format for the on-site interviews, and a more tightly structured mailed survey instrument, created some difficulty when it came time for analyzing the data. When compiling and comparing the data received from the two methods (on-site interview and mailed questionnaire), great care had to be taken to maintain consistency in the data recording or coding procedure. From an efficiency standpoint, the analysis of the data would have been simplified if similar formats had been used during the data collection stage.

Another reflection on the data collection methods used deserves special consideration. This has to do with a matter of confidentiality. The mailed surveys were coded by center and inside each envelope was a letter code which

corresponded to a teacher's name. The purpose of this procedure was to identify those individuals who had not returned the survey so that follow-up materials could be forwarded only to non-respondents. This individual tracking procedure was used since budgetary restrictions prohibited the mass mailing of follow-up materials to all persons on the original mailing list. The problem of confidentiality encountered with this procedure was brought to the researcher's attention by one respondent who stated:

Why did you code the envelopes? If you wanted to know who sent this (survey) back, you should have asked for our names.

In retrospect, a statement which explained the coding procedure should have been included, along with the assurance of confidentiality, in the covering letter sent to the individuals.

The high response rate obtained in this study was particularly pleasing. Seventy-two (72%) percent of the mainstream vocational teachers and 100% or all of the DO lab instructors in Vermont responded. The respondents' interest and concern about improving vocational education for handicapped students and their interest in the focus of the study were probably two key factors in the high response rate. Several techniques used by the investigators may also have contributed to the high return rate. These are listed below.

- Project presentation at area vocational center directors meeting, explaining the project purpose, procedures and timelines. This was followed by a letter sent to each director seeking support for the project and asking the director to encourage faculty response.
- Telephone calls were made to individual teachers and directors at nearly all of the centers scheduled for on-site visitations. The purpose of the project was explained, consent for the interview was sought, and the interview schedule was arranged at the convenience of the individual teacher or administrator.
- Follow-up thank you letters sent to each person interviewed.
- All correspondence sent to individual teachers and administrators included personal signatures of project staff personnel.
- A follow-up letter and materials sent to non-respondents within three weeks of first mailing.
- Mailed questionnaires printed on light blue paper. Wentling (1980) mentions prior research which indicated that colored paper elicits a better response rate than white paper. He noted one study in which the colored paper produced a 15% higher response rate than did white paper.

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Appendix A
Advisory Committee

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Helen Hogan
Parent Representative
153 Trace Drive
Burlington, Vermont 05401

Frank Kane
Auto Mechanics Instructor
Middlebury Union High School
Addison Co. Vocational Center
Middlebury, Vermont 05753

Dick Tyler
Diversified Occupations Supervisor
Spaulding High School
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Bob Watson
Division of Vocational-Technical
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Kathy Finck
Division of Special Education and
Pupil Personnel Services
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Cindy Haines
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Jim Frazier
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Hartford High School
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Appendix B
On-Site Interview Guide
Vocational Teachers with IEP Students
and D.O. Lab Teachers

ON-SITE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Code _____

Current Position. 1. ☐ Vocational Teacher
2. ☐ D.O. Heavy Lab Teacher
3. ☐ D.O. Light Lab Teacher
4. ☐ Coop Coordinator
5. ☐ Area Guidance Coordinator
6. ☐ Special Needs Project Coordinator

Primary field of specialization 1. ☐ Business Education
2. ☐ Trade and Industrial Education
3. ☐ Agricultural Education
4. ☐ Home Economics
5. ☐ Health Occupations
6. ☐ Distributive Education
7. ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Years of Experience in industry 1. ☐ 1-3
2. ☐ 4-6
3. ☐ 7-10
4. ☐ 11-15
5. ☐ more than 15
6. ☐ none

Years of experience in education. 1. ☐ 1-3
2. ☐ 4-6
3. ☐ 7-10
4. ☐ 11-15
5. ☐ more than 15
6. ☐ none

Sex 1. ☐ male
2. ☐ female

What workshops or courses have you participated in concerning vocational programming for handicapped students in the last five years?

- who were the courses sponsored by? (e.g. local school, vocational department, college or university)
- were the courses part of a degree program you're in?
- when exactly did you take these workshops and/or courses?
- what prompted you to take these workshops and/or courses?

I. Program Development

1. What is your role in the placement of a handicapped student in your vocational class?

- are you involved in the initial discussions at the IEP meeting?
- to what extent are you involved?
- when is the vocational placement decision made?

2. What input do you provide the IEP team in developing the learner's vocational education component?

- are you part of the IEP team?

3. In your opinion, in terms of program development, what are the greatest problems or obstacles for your providing input into the student's IEP?

4. In what areas in planning the vocational program of the student's IEP do you feel you need additional training in?

- writing objectives
- understanding handicapping conditions
- assessing present level of performance (entry level skills)
- knowing resources

5. Is there a checklist of objectives or competencies for your class?
If yes, do you use these to help develop the vocational component of the student's IEP?

II. Implementation

1. In your opinion, in terms of implementation, what are the greatest problems or obstacles for your providing vocational education to handicapped students?
2. What are the areas of in-service you feel need to be strengthened for you in terms of delivering vocational instruction to handicapped students?
 - curriculum design and adaptation
 - teaching strategies
 - evaluation and assessment

III. Review/Evaluation

1. How do you measure the effectiveness of your program for handicapped students?
 - how do you know?
2. What information do you provide the IEP team during and at the end of the year?
3. What is your involvement in the follow-up of students after they leave or complete your program?

4. In your opinion, what are the greatest problems or obstacles in reviewing or evaluating a handicapped student's performance?

5. How and when is the decision for the student's exit from the vocational class made?

IV. General

1. What kind of contact do you have with D.O./Mainstream Vocational teachers during the year?

2. What contact do you have during the year with the parents of the handicapped students in your classes?

- informal or structured?

3. Are there supportive services in your school for helping you work with handicapped students in your classes?

- what are those services?

4.a Are there any businesses that you are aware of that train and employ handicapped individuals?

4.b Are you aware of any agencies that provide support services to handicapped individuals?

Appendix C
On-Site Interview Guide
Vocational Teachers Without IEP Students

Questions For On-Site Visit With
Vocational Teachers Who Have Not
Had Handicapped Students in Their Classes

1. Do you know what an Individualized Education Plan for a handicapped student is?
2. Would you want to be part of the team who develops an IEP for a handicapped student in your class?
3. What role do you think you might play in the development of an IEP?
4. What additional information and skills might you need in order to become involved in the IEP development?
5. What additional information and skills might you need in order to provide instruction to a handicapped student in your class?
- 6 a. How do you measure and document student performance in your class?
- 6 b. Would this process be different for handicapped kids?
7. What contact do you have during the year with the parents of students in your classes?
8. Are there supportive services in your school for helping you work with handicapped students in your classes?
9. Are there any community resources, business or industrial, that you are aware of to help train and place handicapped students?

Appendix D
On-Site Interview Guide
Coop Coordinators

Questions for On-Site Visit
with Coop Teachers

1. Do you know what an Individualized Education Plan for a handicapped student is?
2. Would you want to be part of the team who develops an IEP for a handicapped student in a vocational class?
3. What role do you think you might play in the development of an IEP?
4. What additional information and skills might you need in order to become involved in the IEP development?
5. What contact do you have during the year with the parents of students in vocational classes?
6. Are there support services in your school for helping you work with Handicapped students in vocational classes?
7. Are there any community resources, business or industrial, that you are aware of to help train and place handicapped students?

Appendix E
On-Site Interview Guide
Vocational Administrators

Vocational Administrators
On-Site Interview Questionnaire

1. How do you identify students on IEPs who are enrolled in vocational classes?
- 2.a What are the vocational educators' role in the development of the IEP?
- 2.b What is your role in the IEP effort?
3. Are there supportive services in your school for helping your vocational teaching staff work with handicapped students?
- what are those services?
4. Are there any community resources, business or industrial, that you are aware of to help train and place handicapped individuals?
5. What contact does your staff have with the parents of handicapped students?
6. What kind of contact does your staff have with D.O. teachers during the year?
7. What kind of contact do you have with D.O. teachers during the year?

8. What is the connection between the D.O. program and the regular vocational program?

- in terms of curriculum, in-service, faculty meetings, IEPs, supervision, etc.

9. What do you feel are your staff's greatest in-service needs for instructing handicapped students in your vocational classes?

10. How many teachers in your center have students on IEPs? In what areas?

Appendix F
Mailed Survey
to Vocational Teachers

MAILED SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Please read the definition below before completing this survey:

Identification of a Handicapped Person

The term handicapped means persons who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, or other health impaired, or persons with specific learning disabilities who by reason thereof require special education and related services, and who because of their handicapping condition, cannot succeed in the regular vocational education program without special education assistance or who require a modified vocational education program (Definitions, Appendix A, Federal Register, October 3, 1977).

For the purposes of this study the word handicapped is any student with the above stated handicapping conditions who is currently on an I.E.P. (Individualized Education Program). The individualized education program is the document which actually determines the types and amounts of special education services given to handicapped children.

PLEASE READ BEFORE COMPLETING SURVEY

A. Do you presently have any students in your classes with IEPs? (please check)

☐ Yes
☐ No

B. Have you had students with IEPs in your program in prior years? (please check)

☐ Yes
☐ No

1.0 Background Information

1. Current position

1. ☐ Vocational Teacher
2. ☐ D.O. Heavy Lab Teacher
3. ☐ D.O. Light Lab Teacher
4. ☐ Co-op Coordinator
5. ☐ Area Guidance Coordinator
6. ☐ Special Needs Project Coordinator

2. Primary field of specialization

1. ☐ Business Education
 2. ☐ Trade and Industrial Education
 3. ☐ Agricultural Education
 4. ☐ Home Economics
 5. ☐ Health Occupations
 6. ☐ Distributive Education
 7. ☐ Coop Coordinator
 8. ☐ Administrator
 9. ☐ Other (Please specify)
-

3. Years of experience in industry

1. ☐ 1-3
2. ☐ 4-6
3. ☐ 7-10
4. ☐ 11-15
5. ☐ more than 15
6. ☐ none

4. Years of experience in education

1. ☐ 1-3
2. ☐ 4-6
3. ☐ 7-10
4. ☐ 11-15
5. ☐ more than 15
6. ☐ none

5. Sex

1. ☐ male
2. ☐ female

6. Have you taken any college courses concerning vocational instruction for handicapped students?

1. ☐ Yes

2. ☐ No--If no, skip to question #9

7. If yes to question #6, what was (were) the name(s) of the course(s) and when was (were) it (they)? (Approximate titles and dates will be fine)

8. Was this (these) course(s) part of a degree program?

☐ No
01

☐ Yes, If yes, please check for what program:
02

☐ B.A.
12

☐ M.S.
22

☐ C.A.S.
32

9. Have you participated in any workshops on providing vocation instruction to handicapped students in the last five years?

1. ☐ Yes

2. ☐ No - If no, skip to question # 11

10. If yes to question #9, who were the workshops sponsored by? (please check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ college or university

2. ☐ local district in-service

3. ☐ State Department of Education

4. ☐ professional organization

5. ☐ other (please specify)

Please answer the following questions regarding your in-service needs and involvement in vocational programming for handicapped students.

2.0 Program Development

11. What is your role in the placement of a handicapped student in your vocational class? (please check)

1. ☐ involved in initial IEP meeting as part of basic staffing team
2. ☐ have not attended initial meetings but have talked with person(s) responsible for developing objectives of handicapped students' IEP
3. ☐ review IEP after it's been developed and then comment on it before parent approval is given
4. ☐ have had no involvement in IEP development
5. ☐ other (please explain)

12. What input do you provide the IEP staffing team in developing the vocational program for the handicapped learner? (please check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ involved in assessing the student's entry level skills in my vocational area
2. ☐ help set the vocational goals and objectives for students' participation in my program
3. ☐ help identify special services needed for the handicapped student (e.g. remedial reading, adapting vocational lab facilities, etc.)
4. ☐ help in determining how and when student progress is to be measured and reported
5. ☐ have had no involvement in IEP development
6. ☐ other (please explain)

13. In what areas in planning the vocational aspects of the students' IEP do you feel you would like additional training in? (check all appropriate responses)

1. ☒ assessing students' present level of performance
2. ☐ writing individual student objectives
3. ☐ adapting my course objectives for handicapped students
4. ☐ identifying appropriate instructional materials and activities
5. ☐ modifying the lab environment
6. ☐ knowing available school and community resources which help handicapped individuals
7. ☐ other (please specify)

14. Is there a checklist of objectives or competencies that you use in your vocational program?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No--if no, skip to question #16

15. If yes to question #14, do you use these objectives or competencies to help develop the vocational aspects of the students' IEP?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No--Why not? (please explain)

3.0 Implementation

16. What are the areas you feel need to be strengthened in terms of helping you provide vocational instruction to handicapped students? (Check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ providing individualized instruction in the lab setting
2. ☐ modifying instructional materials
3. ☐ motivating and reinforcing handicapped students
4. ☐ working cooperatively with support personnel
5. ☐ helping handicapped students develop positive attitudes about themselves and work
6. ☐ working with parents of handicapped students
7. ☐ using a variety of teaching techniques and strategies to teach a specific skill
8. ☐ assessing and evaluating student performance
9. ☐ other (please specify)

4.0 Review/Evaluation

17. How do you assess student performance?

18. Is this information documented? 1. ☐ Yes 2. ☐ No

19. Are these procedures different for handicapped students?

1. ☐ No

2. ☐ Yes, How so? (please explain)

20 a. What information do you provide the IEP team during and at the end of the year? (check all appropriate responses)

- 1. ☐ student progress on vocational skill development
- 2. ☐ recommendations for work placement or further training
- 3. ☐ student behavior and social status
- 4. ☐ student grades
- 5. ☐ have not provided information to IEP team
- 6. ☐ other (please explain)

20 b. If the above information is provided, it is:

- 1. ☐ requested by the IEP staffing team
- 2. ☐ initiated by myself
- 3. ☐ both of the above
- 4. ☐ other (please explain)

21. Are you involved in the follow-up of students after they leave or complete your program? If so, how?

22. If you have a student who is on an IEP and is not performing well in your class and you feel other program options should be considered, do you have contact with the IEP team to discuss your concerns?
1. ☐ Yes 2. ☐ No If no, who would you contact?

5.0 General

23. When do you have contact during the year with parents of the handicapped students in your classes? (check all appropriate responses)
1. ☐ during the development of the IEP
 2. ☐ during the course of the year
 3. ☐ at the annual review of the students' IEP
 4. ☐ I have no contact with the parents of handicapped students (skip to #25)
 5. ☐ numbers 1, 2, 3 of the above
 6. ☐ other (please specify)
24. If you do have contact with the parents of handicapped students in your class(es), how is this contact made? (check all appropriate responses)
1. ☐ telephone
 2. ☐ in person
 3. ☐ mail
25. Which supportive services in your school are you using to help the handicapped student succeed in your class(es)? (check all appropriate responses)
1. ☐ remedial teachers and aides
 2. ☐ counseling services
 3. ☐ consultation with special education teachers (e.g. regarding adaptation of equipment, appropriate teaching strategies, etc.)
 4. ☐ vocational guidance
 5. ☐ other (please specify)
 6. ☐ none

26 a. Have you had contact with personnel from agencies or organizations that provide services to handicapped individuals?

1. ☐ No
2. ☐ Yes - who and how often? (please specify)

26 b. If you have made use of any of the above agencies or organizations please identify the type of service obtained.

26 c. Have you found these agencies to be helpful? (please explain)

April 13, 1981

Dear Colleague,

The Department of Vocational-Technical Education at the University of Vermont is currently conducting a study of the inservice needs of vocational teachers and Diversified Occupations Light and Heavy Lab instructors in working with handicapped students. One important part of the study is to take a look at the vocational and D.O. teachers' involvement in the I.E.P. process.

The results of the study will be helpful to the Department of Vocational Education at the University in developing future pre-service and inservice instruction. The findings from this study will also be shared with the Division of Vocational Education, State Department of Education and the area vocational centers in Vermont.

This project has been made possible through a grant from the Division of Vocational-Technical Education, Vermont State Department of Education.

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THE ATTACHED QUESTIONNAIRE AND RETURN IT IN THE ENCLOSED, SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE.

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED SURVEY BY APRIL 27th.

YOUR ASSISTANCE IN THIS PROJECT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

Sincerely,

Leonard Albright
Project Director

Hallie Preskill
Project Coordinator

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Appendix G
Mailed Survey
D.O. Lab Teachers

MAILED SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

D.O. Heavy and Light Lab Instructors

Please read the definition below before completing this survey:

Identification of a Handicapped Person

The term handicapped means persons who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, or other health impaired, or persons with specific learning disabilities who by reason thereof require special education and related services, and who because of their handicapping condition, cannot succeed in the regular vocational education program without special education assistance or who require a modified vocational education program (Definitions, Appendix A; Federal Register, October 3, 1977).

For the purposes of this study the word handicapped is any student with the above stated handicapping conditions who is currently on an I.E.P. (Individualized Education Program). The individualized education program is the document which actually determines the types and amounts of special education services given to handicapped children.

1.0 Background Information

1. Current position

1. ☐ Vocational Teacher
2. ☐ D.O. Heavy Lab Teacher
3. ☐ D.O. Light Lab Teacher
4. ☐ Co-op Coordinator
5. ☐ Area Guidance Coordinator
6. ☐ Special Needs Project Coordinator

2. Years of experience in industry

1. ☐ 1-3
2. ☐ 4-6
3. ☐ 7-10
4. ☐ 11-15
5. ☐ more than 15
6. ☐ none

3. Years of experience in education

1. ☐ 1-3
2. ☐ 4-6
3. ☐ 7-10
4. ☐ 11-15
5. ☐ more than 15
6. ☐ none

4. Sex

1. ☐ male
2. ☐ female

5. Have you taken any college courses concerning vocational instruction for handicapped students?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No--If no, skip to question #8

6. If yes to question #5, what was (were) the name(s) of the course(s) and when was (were) it (they) taken? (Approximate titles and dates will be fine)

7. Was this (these) course(s) part of a degree program?

☒ 01 No

02 Yes, If yes, please check for what program:

12 B.A.

22 M.S.

32 C.A.S.

8. Have you participated in any workshops on providing vocation instruction to handicapped students in the last five years?

1. ☐ Yes

2. ☐ No - If no, skip to question #10.

9. If yes to question #8, who were the workshops sponsored by? (please check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ college or university

2. ☐ local district in-service

3. ☐ State Department of Education

4. ☐ professional organization

5. ☐ other (please specify)

Please answer the following questions regarding your in-service needs and involvement in vocational programming for handicapped students.

2.0 Program Development

10. What is your role in the placement of a handicapped student in your lab? (please check)

1. ☐ involved in initial IEP meeting as part of basic staffing team to determine placement of student
2. ☐ review IEP after it's been developed and then comment on it before parent approval is given
3. ☐ have not attended basic staffing meetings but have provided input regarding placement
4. ☐ have had no role in placement decision for student in lab
5. ☐ other (please explain)

11. What input do you provide the IEP staffing team in developing the vocational program for the handicapped learner? (please check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ involved in assessing the student's entry level skills in my lab
2. ☐ help set the vocational goals and objectives for students' participation in my program
3. ☐ help identify special services needed for the handicapped student (e.g. remedial reading, adapting vocational lab facilities, etc.)
4. ☐ help in determining how and when student progress is to be measured and reported
5. ☐ have had no involvement in development of vocational component of IEP
6. ☐ other (please explain)

12. In what areas in planning the vocational aspects of the students' IEP do you feel you would like additional training in? (check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ assessing students' present level of performance
2. ☐ writing individual student objectives
3. ☐ identifying appropriate instructional materials and activities
4. ☐ modifying the lab environment
5. ☐ knowing available school and community resources which help handicapped individuals
6. ☐ other (please specify)

13. Is there a checklist of objectives or competencies that you use in your lab?

1. ☐ Yes

2. ☐ No--if no, skip to question #15

14. If yes to question #13, do you use these objectives or competencies to help develop the vocational aspects of the students' IEP?

1. ☐ Yes

2. ☐ No--Why not? (please explain)

3.0 Implementation

15. What are the areas you feel need to be strengthened in terms of helping you provide vocational instruction to handicapped students? (Check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ providing individualized instruction in the lab setting

2. ☐ modifying instructional materials

3. ☐ motivating and reinforcing handicapped students

4. ☐ working cooperatively with support personnel

5. ☐ helping handicapped students develop positive attitudes about themselves and work

6. ☐ working with parents of handicapped students

7. ☐ using a variety of teaching techniques and strategies to teach a specific skill

8. ☐ assessing and evaluating student performance

9. ☐ other (please specify)

4.0 Review/Evaluation

16. How do you assess student performance?

17. Is this information documented? 1. ☐ Yes 2. ☐ No

18. What information do you provide the IEP team during and at the end of the year? (check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ student progress on vocational skill development
2. ☐ recommendations for work placement or for further training
3. ☐ student behavior and social status
4. ☐ student grades
5. ☐ other (please explain)
6. ☐ have not provided information to IEP team

19. Are you involved in the follow-up of students after they leave or complete your program? If so, how?

5.0 General

20. When do you have contact during the year with parents of the handicapped students in your classes? (check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ during the development of the IEP
2. ☐ during the course of the year
3. ☐ at the annual review of the students' IEP
4. ☐ I have no contact with the parents of handicapped students (skip to #25)
5. ☐ numbers 1, 2, 3 of the above
6. ☐ other (please specify)

21. If you do have contact with the parents of handicapped students in your lab, how is this contact made? (check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ telephone
2. ☐ in person
3. ☐ mail

22. Which supportive services in your school are you using to help the handicapped student succeed in your class(es)? (check all appropriate responses)

1. ☐ remedial teachers and aides
2. ☐ counseling services
3. ☐ consultation with vocational education teachers (e.g. regarding adaptation of equipment, appropriate teaching content, etc.)
4. ☐ vocational guidance
5. ☐ other (please specify)
6. ☐ none

23 a. Have you had contact with personnel from agencies or organizations that provide services to handicapped individuals?

1. ☐ No

2. ☐ Yes - who and how often? (please specify)

b. If you have made use of any of the above agencies or organizations please identify the type of service obtained.

c. Have you found these agencies to be helpful? (please explain)

Appendix H
Follow Up Letter to Mailed Survey

The University of Vermont

DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING BUILDING
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05405
(802) 656-2001



April 24, 1981

Dear Colleague,

Three weeks ago you were sent a questionnaire concerning your needs for instructing handicapped students in Vocational Education. This is just a reminder to ask for your help in completing and returning that questionnaire. If you have already done so, thank you. If not, your reply is needed to help in determining the inservice training needs of vocational educators and the degree of involvement they have in the IEP process.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Leonard Albright
Project Director

Hallie Preskill
Project Coordinator

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Appendix I

Letter to Vocational Administrators
Regarding Mailed Survey to Vocational Staff

TO 7 Vocational Directors

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Within the next ten days we will be sending a survey questionnaire to each vocational instructor in your center. This survey is part of the inservice needs assessment study we shared with you during the January Vocational Directors' meeting. As the attached project summary indicates, our focus is on determining the inservice needs of vocational educators in serving handicapped students. We would appreciate any encouragement you can offer your staff in responding to the survey.

Once again, thanks for your continued support of our project efforts.

Sincerely,

Leonard Albright
Project Director

Hallie Preskill
Project Coordinator

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enclosure

Appendix J

Thank you Letter to Vocational Administrators
for Cooperation During On-Site Interviews

TO 8 Vocational Administrators

We would like to thank you for all the help you provided during our on-site interviews at your vocational center. As a continuing part of our study of inservice training needs of vocational educators in working with handicapped students, we will be sending a survey questionnaire to each vocational instructor who was not selected to be part of the on-site interviews. We would appreciate any additional help you could provide in encouraging your staff to respond to this survey. A return, self-addressed, stamped envelope will be enclosed with the questionnaire.

Once again, thanks much for your on-going support of our project efforts.

Sincerely,

Leonard Albright,
Project Director

Hallie Preskill
Project Coordinator

LA:HP:tp